

Hawkins, CherylA

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2017 8:26 PM
To: Sinks, Tom
Cc: Brown, Clay; Hawkins, CherylA
Subject: RE: Allegation regarding the (b) (6)

Thanks for the reply.

-----Original Message-----

From: Sinks, Tom [mailto:Sinks.Tom@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 07, 2017 1:34 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Brown, Clay <Brown.Clay@epa.gov>; Hawkins, CherylA <Hawkins.CherylA@epa.gov>; Sinks, Tom <Sinks.Tom@epa.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Allegation regarding the (b) (6)

Cheryl Hawkins and I spent significant time working through your extensive complaint. Regarding an appeal - your complaint was sent to, and reviewed by, the Office Inspector General's Office and was deferred to us. We have informed the IG of our decision. You could appeal to them, but given that they deferred to us I don't think they would reconsider. I've copied Clay Brown (OIG) on this email for his records. If there is additional substantive information that you want to share with us, we would look at it.

Neither (b) (6) were involved in the decision. We interviewed (b) (6) to gather information from (b) (6). I informed (b) (6) of the nature of the complaint and to let (b) (6) know we were planning to evaluate it. (b) (6) was otherwise, not involved in the decision.

Re ...

1) EPA's Best Practices for Designating Authorship discusses the utility of a contribution statement. "[A] contribution statement can be a useful tool to affirm each author's role in a work product... A clear and concise contribution statement helps to ensure that all authors are properly recognized for their work on a project, especially on a large project that has many authors." Your contributions to the draft document which are maintained in the final document have been acknowledged by your being credited as an author of the draft. On the other hand, assigning you credit as an author to the final would indicate falsely that you were accountable for any changes made after the draft, including changes to any contributions you made in the draft.

2) Your concerns about abuse, hostility, or negligence would be personnel issues. I assume those would be filed through a personnel grievance or perhaps EEO complaint. Not with the Scientific Integrity Office.

3) I looked at (b) (6) practices. I found documents that did not list authors and documents that included as authors individuals who had left EPA. While contributing authorship according to draft and final report may be unique, that doesn't mean it is inaccurate, unfair, or harmed you in any way. The extensive listing of authors, contributors, and

reviewers in the front section of the (b) (6) suggests that significant thoughtfulness was given to crediting individuals for their efforts - it hardly seems arbitrary or capricious.

Happy to discuss with you on the phone if you'd like. Let me know.

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, November 07, 2017 8:46 AM
To: Sinks, Tom <Sinks.Tom@epa.gov>
Cc: Hawkins, CherylA <Hawkins.CherylA@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Allegation regarding the (b) (6)

Mr. Sinks,

How do I appeal this decision? How were (b) (6) involved in this decision? Who are the members of the Scientific Integrity Team?

Items I require clarification on:

1) The Scientific Integrity Team erred significantly in its logic. You stated below that authorship is a form of contribution statement. Thus, by including my intellectual work in the final document I have contributed to the final document. That is by definition of what "contributed" means. Thus, by your admission, I must be included as a coauthor. Stating that my contribution was to the draft document and not to the final document is not in keeping with your logic, and is an arbitrary and capricious finding to maintain the status quo.

2) Who will follow-up on my additional allegations, those of abuse, hostility, and negligence?

3) How do you handle the fact that the way (b) (6) handled authorship on the (b) (6) differs from how (b) (6) has handled this in the past with respect to (b) (6) and other assessments that (b) (6) has led while at (b) (6). Again -- this appears to be arbitrary and capricious.

V/R,

(b) (6)

-----Original Message-----

From: Sinks, Tom [mailto:Sinks.Tom@epa.gov, <mailto:Sinks.Tom@epa.gov>]

Sent: Monday, November 06, 2017 2:35 PM

To: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

Cc: Sinks, Tom <Sinks.Tom@epa.gov <mailto:Sinks.Tom@epa.gov> >; Hawkins, CherylA <Hawkins.CherylA@epa.gov <mailto:Hawkins.CherylA@epa.gov> >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Allegation regarding the (b) (6)

The Office of the Inspector General referred your concerns regarding authorship of the (b) (6) to the Scientific Integrity Official. She is on extended sick leave. The matter was investigated by the Scientific Integrity Team and myself. We concluded ...

Assigning authorship according to contributions made to the draft and final document is a form of contribution statement. Authorship assignments to the (b) (6) were accurate and justified based upon both the extensive work required to finalize the assessment and the desire to recognize the different contributions made. Allegations of

scientific misconduct are the responsibility of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), except for plagiarism. The OIG and the Scientific Integrity Official have an agreement that cases of plagiarism will be addressed by the Scientific Integrity team. The allegation of plagiarism in this case is unjustified because intellectual contributions to the draft document were appropriately credited to its authors. The allegations of abuse, hostility, and negligence fall outside the realm of scientific integrity.

Of note, the EPA Best Practices for Designating Authorship[1] states ... "Many authorship disputes arise because project participants have not discussed authorship or have done so late in the project. ... The most important best practice to avoid authorship disputes is to discuss project responsibilities and authorship among participating individuals before a project commences and periodically as work progresses." In this instance, communications about authorship among potential authors was initiated only weeks before the release of the final document. This authorship dispute may have been avoided had this best practice included all authors of the (b) (6)

Thank you for expressing your concerns. No further action will be taken on this matter. This information has been shared with the OIG.

Thomas Sinks, Ph.D.

Director, Office of the Science Advisor

Environmental Protection Agency

1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW

Room 41251 RRB, MC 8105 R

